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Buckley Is Dead, and Iran Is Responsible

William Buckley, one of the six American hostages kidnaped by Shiite Moslem extremists, is dead.

The State Department's official position is that "we assume that he is alive and have been operating on that principle." But the Central Intelligence Agency, for which Buckley worked, has highly sensitive intelligence information that leaves no doubt of Buckley's death.

From our intelligence sources, we have pieced together the gruesome details of Buckley's captivity and death, and can disclose the nation responsible: Iran. In fact, he died in a Tehran hospital from a heart attack brought on by months of torture.

The 57-year-old Buckley was officially listed as a political officer with the U.S. Embassy in Beirut. Actually, he was the CIA station chief. A brave and effective intelligence professional who had served earlier in Vietnam, Buckley was aware of the risks that were an inescapable part of his job. Friends say that's why he never married—he didn't want to cause suffering to a wife and children in the event of his death.

Ironically, Buckley devoted much of his time and energy to developing information that might prevent terrorist attacks on Americans in the Middle East. He did not hire local contract agents for missions of violence.

Buckley was kidnaped by Shiites on March 16, 1984, and taken initially to the eastern Bekaa Valley, a Syrian-controlled hotbed of Iranian terrorists and revolutionary guards. One source says the CIA believes it was the Syrians who disclosed Buckley's true identity to his captors, the Hezbollah (Party of God).

There is no doubt that Buckley was brutally tortured over a long period. His appearance had changed shockingly in a videotape released by his captors last January.

Buckley was taken to the Iranian revolutionary guard (Pasdaran) headquarters at Baalbek, Lebanon, for repeated interrogations. Then, in early March 1985, the Hezbollah, apparently fearing the Syrians would turn Buckley loose, arranged to transport him secretly to Iran. He was disguised as an injured Pasdaran soldier and flown with several wounded revolutionary guards to Damascus in a Syrian army helicopter.

The same day, Buckley and at least one authentic Iranian soldier were put aboard an Iran Air 727 and were flown to Tehran. The American agent's first place of captivity was a house on Fereshteh Street in a northern suburb of Tehran.

Buckley was interrogated—and tortured further—in the basement of the Iranian Foreign Ministry. He required frequent medical treatment, which included at least one stay in a Tehran hospital.

In late March, an Iraqi bomb landed in Fereshteh Street, narrowly missing the house where Buckley was being held. He was hastily moved to a revolutionary guard camp (called Salehbad), near the Shiite holy city of Qom.

It was there, probably between April 10 and 15, that Buckley suffered a heart attack induced by torture and captivity. He was taken to a hospital in Tehran and died soon after.

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